



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-ES-2023-0079; FXES11140400000EA-234-FF04EA1000]

Receipt of Incidental Take Permit Application and Proposed Habitat Conservation Plan for the Alabama Beach Mouse, Baldwin County, AL; Categorical Exclusion

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comment.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce receipt of an application from David Clampitt (applicant) for an incidental take permit (ITP) under the Endangered Species Act. The applicant requests the ITP to take the federally listed Alabama beach mouse (*Peromyscus polionotus ammobates*) incidental to construction in the City of Orange Beach, Baldwin County, Alabama. We request public comment on the application, which includes the applicant's proposed habitat conservation plan (HCP), and on the Service's preliminary determination that the proposed permitting action may be eligible for a categorical exclusion pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, the Department of the Interior's (DOI) NEPA regulations, and the DOI Departmental Manual. To make this preliminary determination, we prepared a draft environmental action statement and low-effect screening form, both of which are also available for public review. We invite comment from the public and local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies.

DATES: We must receive your written comments on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*].

ADDRESSES: *Obtaining Documents:* You may obtain copies of the documents online in Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2023-0079 at <https://www.regulations.gov>.

Submitting Comments: If you wish to submit comments on any of the documents, you

may do so in writing by any of the following methods:

- *Online:* <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2023-0079.
- *U.S. mail:* Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2023-0079; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: PRB/3W, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. William Lynn, Project Manager, by telephone at 251-441-5868 or via email at william_lynn@fws.gov. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services.

Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce receipt of an application from David Clampitt (applicant) for an incidental take permit (ITP) under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). The applicant requests the ITP to take the federally listed Alabama beach mouse (*Peromyscus polionotus ammobates*) (ABM) incidental to the construction of a single-family home (project) in the City of Orange Beach, Baldwin County, Alabama. We request public comment on the application, which includes the applicant's habitat conservation plan (HCP), and on the Service's preliminary determination that this proposed ITP qualifies as low effect, and may qualify for a categorical exclusion pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations (40 CFR 1501.4), the Department of the Interior's (DOI) NEPA regulations (43 CFR 46), and the DOI's Departmental Manual (516 DM 8.5(C)(2)). To make this preliminary determination, we prepared a draft environmental action statement and low-effect screening form, both of which are also available for public review.

Proposed Project

The applicant requests a 30-year ITP to take ABM by destroying approximately 0.160 acre (ac) of occupied ABM foraging and sheltering habitat incidental to the construction of a single-family home located on a 1.67-ac parcel in Baldwin County, Alabama. The previous single-family home that was located on the site was destroyed in 2004 by Hurricane Ivan.

The applicant proposes 1.10 ac of on-site mitigation through the restoration (0.01 ac), enhancement (0.41 ac), and protection (0.68 ac) of ABM habitat. This proposed onsite mitigation would be protected and maintained in the event of landfalling tropical cyclones for the duration of the permit. In addition to the on-site conservation measures, the applicant will purchase and dedicate to conservation a 0.232-ac platted lot that contains existing ABM habitat. This off-site mitigation area is near Federal lands and will remove the parcel from development pressure and future ITP processes. In total, the plan proposes restoring, enhancing, and protecting 1.332 ac of ABM habitat.

The standard mitigation and minimization measures to be implemented on the site include installing sea turtle-friendly lighting and tinted windows, landscaping with native vegetation, enhancing the frontal dune area, constructing a concrete driveway that will not disperse in a storm surge, implementing refuse-control measures during construction and requiring that future residents utilize such measures, and restoring ABM habitat after tropical storms. Free-roaming cats and the use of exterior rodenticide would be prohibited within the parcel.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made available to the public. While you may request that we withhold your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee

that we will be able to do so.

Our Preliminary Determination

The Service has made a preliminary determination that the applicant's project, including land clearing, infrastructure building, landscaping, and the proposed mitigation and minimization measures, would individually and cumulatively have a minor effect on the Alabama beach mouse and the human environment. Therefore, we have preliminarily determined that the proposed ESA section 10(a)(1)(B) permit would be a low-effect ITP that individually or cumulatively would have a minor effect on the Alabama beach mouse and may qualify for application of a categorical exclusion pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA regulations, DOI's NEPA regulations, and the DOI Departmental Manual. A low-effect incidental take permit is one that would result in (1) minor or nonsignificant effects on species covered in the HCP; (2) nonsignificant effects on the human environment; and (3) impacts that, when added together with the impacts of other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable actions, would not result in significant cumulative effects to the human environment.

Next Steps

The Service will evaluate the application and the comments received to determine whether to issue the requested permit. We will also conduct an intra-Service consultation pursuant to section 7 of the ESA to evaluate the effects of the proposed take on the species. We will consider the above in determining whether the permit issuance criteria of section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA have been met. If met, the Service will issue ITP number PER0284585 to David Clampitt.

Authority

The Service provides this notice under section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 17.32) and the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and its implementing

regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508 and 43 CFR 46).

William J. Pearson,

Field Supervisor,

Alabama Ecological Service Field Office.

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